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גמור

A HITHERTO UNKNOWN TERM IN MEDIAEVAL HEBREW PROSODY

IN the very rare liturgical rite entitled *לנוסח ברצלונה מנהג* (Salonica, 1526) there is found a number of Piyyutim, where the word גמור is printed on the margin after the first stanza (comp. fol. 72 a, 91 b, 95 a, 96 b). This has not attracted the attention of scholars, and the meaning of the word has remained an enigma. In one of the poems of Moses ibn Gikatilla, published in the *Journal of Jewish Lore and Philosophy* (Cincinnati, 1919), pp. 313-17, this word occurs in the abbreviated form גמ', which led me to state that גמור was a term placed in some poems at the end of the first stanza (comp. *ibid.*, p. 314, note 9). But the reason for this usage as well as the meaning of the word remained a puzzle.

Lately, however, I came across four poems, published by Dr. Mann in the second volume of his *Jews in Egypt and Palestine* (pp. 260-3), an examination of which helped to solve this problem.

These four poems are written in one metre and each stanza ends with the same phrase *ליכין משפחת היכני*, and besides, the first letters of the four poems form the acrostic *יצחק*, all of which would go to prove that these four poems were only four stanzas or parts of one and the same poem. The only argument against this would be the fact that each of these parts has a different set of rhymes. At the end of the first part, however, there occurs again the abbreviation גמ'. This led me to examine all the poems where the word גמור occurs, and it was found that each one of them consisted of stanzas of different rhymes, but each stanza ended with a verse which had the same rhyme as the first

stanza. In the case of the poems published by Mann each stanza ended with a couplet having the same rhyme as the first stanza. Bearing these facts in mind it suggested itself to me that the word גמור was placed at the end of the first stanza to safeguard against the error of considering the following stanzas as separate poems on account of the difference in the rhymes. גמור is, therefore, in my opinion, not a Hebrew word but a derivative of the Arabic جَمَرَ 'to collect', and is used as a technical term to indicate that one rhyme, or one couplet, connects or collects the various stanzas into one poem.

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